



**County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

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December 19, 2006

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF SERVICES OUTCOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
AUGMENTATION SPENDING PLAN, APPROPRIATION ADJUSTMENT AND INTERIM
ORDINANCE AUTHORITY
(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS) – (4 VOTES)**

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Delegate authority to the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), or her designee, to submit a plan to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) for use of the Services Outcome Improvement Project (SOIP) Augmentation funding upon receipt from CDSS of instructions for plan submission.
2. Delegate authority to the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) to approve a Request for Appropriation Adjustment (Attachment) to incorporate the \$20.3 million SOIP funding and \$2.5 million from increases in other State allocations into the FY 2006-07 Adopted Budget for a total increase in appropriation and revenue of \$22.8 million upon receipt of CDSS' approval of the County's spending plan. The additional \$22.8 million will be used to fund 330 additional positions to reduce social worker caseloads and workloads, \$2.5 million to provide mentoring services for youth in out-of-home care (both DCFS and Probation supervised youth) and youth at risk of placement in out-of-home care, and \$9.5 million for miscellaneous one-time infrastructure costs associated with the additional staff and one-time program expansion costs. There will be no increase in net County cost (NCC).
3. Approve interim ordinance authority pursuant to County Code Section 6.06.020 for: **(a)** 70 Children's Social Worker (CSW) and 22 Supervising Children's Social Worker (SCSW) positions *to reduce social work caseloads*, and **(b)** 91 Human Services Aide (HSA) positions, 40 Adoptions Assistant (AA) positions, 34 Senior Typist Clerk (STC) positions, 21 Intermediate Clerk (IC) positions, 2 Eligibility Worker II (EW) positions, and 50 Intermediate Typist Clerk (ITC) positions *to reduce social worker workloads*.

The cost of the additional positions will be financed using the additional \$22.8 million in State revenue with no NCC.

4. Authorize DCFS to fill the above-referenced positions with temporary appointments pending determination of the appropriate pay classification by the CAO upon receipt of CDSS approval of the County's spending plan.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

The social services budget trailer bill (AB 1808) appropriated \$98 million statewide to improve child welfare services outcomes. AB 1808 states the funding "may be spent on local priorities identified in the county's system improvement plan including, but not limited to, any of the following:

- "(A) Reducing high worker caseloads and workload.
- "(B) Clerical and paraprofessional support.
- "(C) Direct services to clients, such as mental health or substance abuse treatment.
- "(D) Prevention and early intervention services, such as differential response.
- "(E) Permanency and youth transition practice improvements.
- "(F) Any other investments to better serve children and families, which may include services to support older youth in foster care, such as mentoring services."

The purpose of the recommended actions is to enable DCFS to access available State funding, with no County match required, to reduce social worker caseloads and workload consistent with the intent of the Legislature. The reduction in CSW and SCSW caseloads and workload, as well as the funding to be invested in mentoring, will improve safety and permanency for children/youth.

Approximately \$10.8 million will be used to reduce social work caseloads and workload per case by increasing the number of CSW and SCSW staff (i.e., reduce the number of cases for which each CSW and SCSW is responsible) and increasing the number of clerical/paraprofessional staff (i.e., reduce the amount of work required by a social worker for each case). The \$10.8 million will finance the cost of the staff for the six months remaining in FY 2006-07 as well increased operating costs associated with increased staff (such as increased mileage costs, increased monthly phone charges, etc.). \$2.5 million will be used to finance the cost of mentoring services for youth in out-of-home care (both DCFS and Probation supervised youth) and youth at risk of placement in out-of-home care; and the remaining \$9.5 million will be used to finance the cost of one-time-only infrastructure expenses associated with additional staff (such as computers, printers, phones, etc.) and costs for expansion of Wraparound and Family Preservation pending implementation of the Title IV-E Waiver. In FY 2007-08, the \$9.5 million funding being used in FY 2006-07 for one-time infrastructure investments and program expansion will be redirected to fully finance the cost of the additional staff. Title IV-E Waiver will provide the funding for the expansion of Wraparound and Family Preservation in FY 2007-08.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The recommended actions are consistent with the principles of the Countywide Strategic Plan Goals 4 (Fiscal Responsibility) and 5 (Children and Family Well-Being). The recommended actions will enable the County to access available funding that requires no County match to improve the lives of children and families in the County.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The \$22.8 million in additional State revenue will finance the cost of 330 additional positions, mentoring efforts, one-time infrastructure investment and services expansion costs as follows:

- \$3.2 million – 70 CSW positions for 6 months and related operating costs
- \$1.1 million – 22 SCSW positions for 6 months and related operating costs
- \$2.5 million – 91 HSA positions for 6 months and related operating costs
- \$1.2 million – 40 AA positions for 6 months and related operating costs
- \$0.9 million – 34 STC positions for 6 months and related operating costs
- \$1.3 million – 50 ITC positions for 6 months and related operating costs
- \$0.5 million – 21 IC positions for 6 months and related operating costs
- \$0.1 million – 2 EW II positions for 6 months and related operating costs
- \$2.5 million – community based mentoring coordinators and academic mentoring
- \$9.5 million – infrastructure investment and services expansion for 6 months
- \$22.8 million total

The Request for Appropriation Adjustment reflects an increase in State revenue of \$22.8 million, as well as the following appropriation increases:

- \$9.5 million for Salary & Employee Benefits
- \$9.3 million for Services and Supplies
- \$4.0 million for Fixed Assets

In FY 2007-08, the funding used in FY 2006-07 for one-time infrastructure investment and program expansion will be redirected to fund the full year cost of the 330 additional positions, and Title IV-E Waiver funding will be used to finance the cost of program expansion.

No County match is required for the SOIP Augmentation funding; so there will be no impact on NCC.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

AB 1808, the FY 2006/07 Social Services Budget Trailer Bill, appropriated the \$98 million to improvement child welfare services outcomes statewide. AB 1808 states "it is the intent of the Legislature that these funds be linked to improved outcomes, and provided to counties on an ongoing basis."

While the Department has already made significant progress in reducing the timelines to permanency and improving safety, DCFS is committed to further improvement by utilizing new strategies and shifting workload, where possible from social work staff to paraprofessional and

clerical. The additional HSA staff will enable DCFS to implement an ambitious family visitation policy with an emphasis on more structured and more frequent visitation between children/youth and their families to further improve the timelines to permanency. HSA staff will monitor visits between children/youth and their family; assist social work staff with emergency response investigations, placements, documentation of activities on CWS/CMS, transporting children and/or families (for example, transporting to visits, placements, medical appointments, therapy, court hearings, etc.); and assist clients with forms completion (such as Section 8 housing applications and insurance forms).

Consideration was given to contracting out the HSA function if Proposition A requirements were met. However, due to the need for HSAs to work very closely with and actually integrate into the social work units (as was recommended by the Clerical Workload Study produced by Walter R. McDonald & Associates, Inc.), the decision was made to utilize County staff for this function. The intent is to recruit a pool of candidates from outside the County, as well as from in-house, who are interested in becoming or currently studying to be social workers.

The additional AA positions will function as "permanency assistants" and enable the department to implement extensive family finding efforts. The additional EW positions will function as technical assistants (TA) in the Kinship Division. The TAs will assist the Kinship social work staff with home approval process for relatives and non-related extended family members as required by the Adoptions and Safe Families Act (ASFA). These staff will contribute to the goals of shortening the timelines to permanency and improving safety.

The additional ITC, IC and STC positions will provide a variety of clerical support activities (such as creating case files, copying and faxing documents, typing, data input, etc.) for the social work staff in regional operations.

The additional staff will enable the department to achieve the following goals:

- Reduce the number of children/youth in foster care through reunification, legal guardianship or adoption by 1,656 (an 8% reduction).
- Reduce the median number of days in out-of-home care by 82 days (15% reduction).
- Reduce abuse of children/youth in relative and non-relative foster care by 19 cases (an 8% reduction).
- Within four months of implementation of the permanency assistant function, searches will identify a previously unknown or lost relative/non-related family member (NRFM) for 50% of the children/youth for whom a family finding search was conducted.
- Within one year of implementation, a family member/NRFM will have ongoing contact with 33% of children for whom a family finding search was conducted.

All appointments to interim ordinance positions will be temporary pending the CAO's determination of the appropriate pay class for the functions to be performed. In the event the CAO determines lower level positions are more appropriate for the functions, the employees will be returned to the pay class they held prior to appointment to these temporary positions. If new hires are appointed to these positions, they will be subject to release from County employment or demotion.

The Department has an overall vacancy rate of 5.7%. This vacancy rate is consistent with the DCFS' overall attrition rate. The current vacancy rates for CSWs and SCSWs are 1.4% and 3.5%, respectively.

Of the \$2.5 million to be used for mentoring, \$2 million will be utilized annually for community-based mentoring services, and \$0.5 million will be utilized annually for academic mentoring centers. The community-based mentoring will be accomplished by contracting with community-based organizations who will recruit, screen, train and monitor adults to be matched as mentors to DCFS and Probation supervised youth. The academic mentoring centers will be developed in middle schools in areas with a high concentration of DCFS and Probation supervised youth. The academic mentoring centers will work in collaboration with the school districts and community-based organizations to recruit, screen, train, assign and monitor adults to provide academic mentoring services.

Due to the length of time required to conduct a solicitation process for the mentoring services, the full \$2.5 million will not be utilized in FY 2006-07. Therefore, a portion of the funding will be used in FY 2006-07 for one-time-only purposes which may include the acquisition of Livescan equipment dedicated for the mentoring program, consultant services to provide training on mentoring, support events for youth and mentors, acquisition of software, and development of recruitment material. In FY 2007-08, the funding used for one-time purposes will be redirected to finance the full year cost of the community-based mentoring and academic mentoring contracts.

A total of \$9.5 million will be used for one-time-only purchases to acquire tablet personal computers, servers, remote access technology, cell telephones, etc. for the additional staff, as well as to fund expansion of Family Preservation and Wraparound pending implementation of the Title IV-E Waiver. In order to maximize use of the Family Preservation funding in FY 2005-06, agencies had to provide services to a higher number of families late in the fiscal year to compensate for the slow ramp-up period. As a result, agencies are currently providing services at a level higher than the current available funding can accommodate. The funding directed to Family Preservation will enable agencies to continue to provide the level of service they are currently providing. The funding directed to Wraparound will enable the Department to increase the number of youth who can be served in Wraparound. With implementation of the Title IV-E Waiver, Waiver funding can be utilized to continue the Family Preservation and Wraparound programs at the expanded level, and the SOIP Augmentation funding can be redirected to fund the full-year costs of the additional staff in FY 2007-08. These expenditures will contribute to the effort to further reduce timelines to permanency.

CAO has reviewed and approved this Board letter

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES

Approval of the recommended actions will improve the lives of children and families in all supervisorial districts by improving safety and shortening the timelines to permanency for children/youth under DCFS supervision.

CONCLUSION

Upon approval of the requested actions by the Board of Supervisors, it is requested that the Executive Officer of the Board of Supervisors send one adopt-stamped copy of the Board letter to the following:

1. Department of Children and Family Services
Bureau of Finance and Administration
425 Shatto Place, Room 300
Los Angeles, California 90020
Attention: Claudine Crank, Interim Deputy Director
2. Department of Children and Family Services
Bureau of Finance and Administration
425 Shatto Place, Room 203
Los Angeles, California 90020
Attention: Tito Barin, Budget Officer
3. Department of Children and Family Services
Human Resources Division
425 Shatto Place
Los Angeles, California 90020
Attention: David Waage, Personnel Officer

Respectfully submitted,

PATRICIA S. PLOEHN, LCSW
Director

Attachment (1)

c: Chief Administrative Office
Auditor-Controller